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PRESS RELEASE

USAID Assists Tamchi-Bulak Water Users Association (WUA) with Rehabilitation of Their Irrigation Infrastructure

On May 14, 2008, Tamchi-Bulak Water Users Association (WUA) in Bazarkorgon held a ceremony to mark the opening of their new office and turn over an excavator, which will be used for maintenance and rehabilitation of the WUA irrigation system. The office and excavator were made possible through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) grant funds. The Water Users Association Support Program (WUASP) is funded by USAID and implemented by Winrock International.

USAID/CAR Regional Mission Director William Frej, USAID Kyrgyzstan Country Representative Patricia Shapiro, representatives of the local government, WUASP, WUA, and community members participated in this opening and handover event.

At independence, Kyrgyzstan had about 750,000 hectares of land under irrigation; however, the lack of irrigation investment has led to the rapid decline of the entire irrigation infrastructure. Water logging, salinization, silted canals, and mismanagement have all led to a decrease in irrigated land and crop yields.

WUAs are important because they ensure the equitable distribution of water between farmers; they limit conflicts between farmers; and they promote the productive use of Central Asia's most valuable natural resource – water. The overall objective of WUASP is to create and strengthen WUAs so that farmers can operate, manage, and make the investment decisions needed to maintain and improve on-farm irrigation and drainage systems. As a result of support from WUASP, WUAs like Tamchi-Bulak have bought irrigated land back into production; member farmers have increased investment into their land and WUA, and have increased their farm incomes. WUASP is currently assisting 19 WUAs in southern Kyrgyzstan to become sustainable and effective water management organizations.



Excavator donated by USAID to Tamchi-Bulak WUA.

1,394 hectares, covering three villages with 175 ha of kitchen gardens. The number of beneficiaries within these villages is 10,500. Tamchi-Bulak WUA is similar to other WUAs in the area in that water could not reach the tail of the system due to silted canals. The lack of water control structures and no viable organization to coordinate water deliveries led to frequent conflicts between farmers over water.

The WUASP initiated work with Tamchi-Bulak WUA during the summer of 2007. It is one of four WUASP WUAs receiving water from a diversion structure on the Kara-Ungur Sai River. Tamchi-Bulak has 1,291 members, serves an area of



USAID/CAR Mission Director William Frej (left) and Abdykadir Jolchiev, Head of Beshikjon Village Council, at the opening of the new WUA office.



Tamchi-Bulak WUA members constructing irrigation gates.

As Jolchiev stated, “access to water has given us an opportunity to improve crop yields, grow vegetables, and renew drying gardens; women do not have to carry buckets of water several kilometers back to their houses, and young families are inspired to stay here and construct houses. For this, we are very thankful to WUASP, WUA, and to the American people.”

WUASP is funded by USAID and became possible thanks to assistance coming from the American people. Since 1992, USAID has provided assistance valued at about \$400 million to support economic growth, agriculture, energy, health, and education systems and the development of democratic institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic.

***Winrock International** is an international, non-governmental, non-profit organization, working in Central Asia for more than 14 years. **The Water User Association Support Program** is a five year program (2004-2009) working in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The program works directly with those who are most affected by degraded water delivery systems, providing training in system renovation, operation, and management. Participants learn how to make investment decisions needed to maintain and improve on-farm systems, resolve conflicts, and deal with long-standing water management and delivery problems.*